

In the claims:

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2. (canceled)
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11. (canceled)
12. (previously presented) An apparatus for holding and using a first chopstick and a second

chopstick comprising

a first hollow tube connected to a first extension;

a second hollow tube connected to a second extension;

a device having a first slot and a second slot opposite the first slot;

a spring attached to the device and oriented so that in a rest state the spring is

substantially perpendicular to the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube;

wherein the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube are biased by the spring, so that in the rest state, the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube are substantially parallel to each other;

wherein the first extension lies at least partially inside of the first slot;

wherein the second extension lies at least partially inside of the second slot;

wherein the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube are spaced apart;

and further comprising a first pin inserted through an opening in the first extension and through a first opening in the device, wherein the first pin thereby connects the first extension to the device so that the first extension and the first hollow tube can pivot to at least some extent with respect to the device using the first pin as a first pivot point;

a second pin inserted through an opening in the second extension and through a second opening in the device, wherein the second pin thereby connects the second extension to the device so that the second extension and the second hollow tube can pivot to at least some extent with respect to the device using the second pin as a second pivot point;

wherein the first pivot point and the second pivot point differ;

wherein the first chopstick can be inserted into the first hollow tube and the second chopstick can be inserted into the second hollow tube so that in the rest state the first chopstick and the second chopstick are substantially parallel to each other.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein

the device is a block structure which in the rest state is substantially perpendicular to the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 further comprising

the first chopstick; and

the second chopstick.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein

the first extension is fixed to an outside surface of the first hollow tube and the first extension projects outward substantially perpendicularly from the outside surface of the first hollow tube; and

the second extension is fixed to an outside surface of the second hollow tube and the second extension projects outward substantially perpendicularly from the outside surface of the second hollow tube.

16. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein

the spring lies within a third hollow tube, wherein the spring is distinct from the third hollow tube;

wherein in the rest state, the third hollow tube is substantially perpendicular to the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube;

and wherein the third hollow tube is fixed to the device.

17. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein

the block structure has a first curved surface, which is adjacent the first hollow tube and which limits the extent to which the first hollow tube can pivot with respect to the device; and

the block structure has a second curved surface opposite the first curved surface, wherein the second curved surface is adjacent to the second hollow tube, and the second curved surface limits the extent to which the second hollow tube can pivot with respect to the device.

18. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein

the first hollow tube and the second hollow tube are spaced apart by about the length of a dimension of the device.